

# Stormwater Management Business Area

## Department of Public Works and Environmental Services

# ENVIRONMENTAL SCAN

**FINAL**

April 8, 2003



## 1 Introduction and Methodology

This report presents an Environmental Scan for the Fairfax County Department of Public Works and Environmental Services Stormwater Management Business Area (STW). The Scan was performed during the first quarter of 2003 with the assistance of AMEC Earth & Environmental, Inc.

The goal of the Environmental Scan is to provide a “snapshot” of the internal and external issues and trends that face the STW in its current and future work. The purpose of the Scan is to promote future-oriented thinking in both the management and staff of the STW. The Scan will also provide strategic intelligence that will be used during the development of the STW’s Strategic Plan. While the STW conducts business every day within the confines of its environment, this report is intended to highlight trends that are converging, diverging, speeding up, slowing down, or interacting so that the STW can react and proactively and systematically address the new, the unexpected, the major and minor issues it will encounter.

This Scan is divided into two major sections: the external environment and the internal business of running the STW. The external environment considers the macro-environment in which Fairfax County resides, including social, economic, environmental, and political factors and trends. The STW’s direct and indirect stakeholders, e.g. employees, customers, political leaders, and other interested parties, have provided information regarding the internal environment.

Both primary and secondary sources were used to identify trends and to define potential threats, opportunities and changes for the program over the course of the next several years. The methodology behind the Environmental Scan consisted of the following tasks.

### **Task 1 – Development of Environmental Scan Parameters**

An initial facilitated meeting of the STW Leadership Team was held on February 11, 2003. The primary objectives of the meeting were to:

- develop the parameters of the Environmental Scan;
- identify major existing information resources;
- review a staff questionnaire developed by the consultant;
- identify external stakeholders to be interviewed; and,
- provide an overview of a facilitated SWOT (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats) process.

Figure 1.1: Relationship of the Stormwater Management Business Area to the Department of Public Works and Environmental Services



## **Task 2 – Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats (SWOT)**

A SWOT process was facilitated by the consultant at an all-day meeting on March 6, 2003. Participants consisted of the primary members of the STW and several in-County stakeholders. A SWOT analysis examines strengths and weaknesses (internal to the organization) and opportunities and threats (external to the organization). Participants ranked the results to arrive at top issues in each area. Table 1.1 presents the summary results of that analysis. Appendix B presents the full results of the SWOT analysis.

## **Task 3 – Analysis of Secondary Materials**

The consultant conducted a review and analysis of secondary materials to support the Environmental Scan. The review consisted of the following:

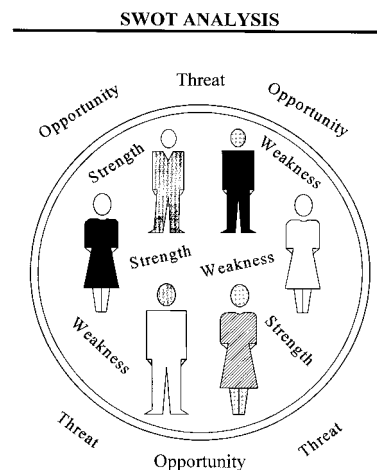
- documents, studies, and other information provided by Fairfax County staff; and,
- State and federal regulations pertinent to the Fairfax County program, as jointly identified by the consultant and by Fairfax County staff.

In addition, the consultant, with the assistance of the STW, conducted a representative survey of internal and external stakeholders between the initial meeting and the SWOT meeting. The survey consisted of the following:

- an electronic survey sent to all members of the STW and the Office of Site Development Services (OSDS);
- an electronic survey sent to 10 individuals within the County but outside of the STW; and,
- face-to-face meetings with STW business area customers/stakeholders.

Nineteen individual members of the STW responded to the survey; in addition, facilitated meetings of the STW field crews yielded four collective responses. Four surveys were returned from individuals within the County but outside of the business line. Eight 30 to 60 minute face-to-face meetings were conducted with outside stakeholders and one in-County stakeholder. Stakeholders consisted of one regional government representative, three consultant/industry representatives, one representative from Fairfax County Fire and Rescue, and three civic/environmental representatives.

The summary results of the outside stakeholder interview process are presented in Appendix C.



**Table 1.1: Summary Results of SWOT Analysis by Priority<sup>1</sup>**

<b>INTERNAL ENVIRONMENT</b>	
<b>STRENGTHS</b>	<b>WEAKNESSES</b>
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Emergency response.</li> <li>2. Versatility in tasks and programs.</li> <li>3. Institutional knowledge.</li> <li>4. Not overly perfectionist → get more done/balancing rules, responsibilities and risks.</li> <li>5. Talented workforce.</li> <li>6. Good problem-solving skills → make things work.</li> <li>7. Ability to reallocate resources within programs.</li> <li>8. Can do attitude “where there is a will there is a way.”</li> <li>9. Good fiscal control.</li> <li>10. Ability to incorporate technology and innovation.</li> <li>11. In tune with existing impending regulations.</li> <li>12. Diversity, both in terms of people and opinions.</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Limited Term Exempt (LTE) employees create scheduling difficulties and morale problems.</li> <li>2. Inter-departmental communication and cross-cutting outreach among County divisions.</li> <li>3. Lack sense of identity: what do we do? → “stormwater” leads to various interpretations.</li> <li>4. No dedicated funding source to accomplish what needs to be done.</li> <li>5. Opportunities for upward mobility limited.</li> <li>6. Overall outreach efforts lacking.</li> <li>7. Policy level lack of integration between OSDS and STW → lack of integration between planning and implementation processes.</li> <li>8. History of being reactive versus strategists.</li> <li>9. Losing too many well-qualified people to retirement.</li> <li>10. Cannot replace staff due to inadequate pay compared to other opportunities.</li> <li>11. Fixes of infrastructure are often short-term, not long-term. Costs more in the long run.</li> </ol>
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Political support from the Board of Supervisors.</li> <li>2. Healthy citizen interest in the environment.</li> <li>3. Proactive watershed planning.</li> <li>4. Federal/state grant opportunities, outside funding.</li> <li>5. Heightened awareness due to negative visible conditions, e.g., West Nile Virus, etc.).</li> <li>6. Retrofitting of stormwater management facilities to BMPs through the County’s redevelopment/revitalization plans.</li> <li>7. Environmental stewardship has been integrated into the County Executive’s vision and mission.</li> <li>8. Collaboration with external councils and commissions (Tree Commission, EQAC, Planning Commission, etc.) that have a vested interest in environmental issues.</li> <li>9. Changes to County’s organizational structure that are environmentally supportive.</li> <li>10. County-wide focus on strategic planning provides opportunities for intra-County alignment, collaboration, etc.</li> <li>11. Build on past successes.</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Lack of consistent funding source and loss/reduction of funding – competing with other County functions (schools, F&amp;R, IT).</li> <li>2. Frequent changes in management philosophy, e.g., HPO → what’s next?</li> <li>3. Overly high citizen expectations given resources.</li> <li>4. Development community pressure, e.g., opposition to regulation, poor construction/inspection.</li> <li>5. Lack of well organized grass roots buy-in/support for current programs.</li> <li>6. Changing/new regulations (unfunded mandates) Tributary Strategies, TMDLs, ADA, etc.</li> <li>7. RIF/staff reductions.</li> <li>8. Poor support/coordination with other County and outside departments, e.g., FCPA, VDOT → (lack of unified County vision, strategy).</li> <li>9. Unplanned, short notice initiatives with high emotions (West Nile Virus/public health/terrorism).</li> <li>10. Limitations of existing facilities.</li> <li>11. Perceived savings from privatization.</li> </ol>
<b>OPPORTUNITIES</b>	<b>THREATS</b>
<b>EXTERNAL ENVIRONMENT</b>	

<sup>1</sup> See Appendix A for list of acronyms.